DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 377 655 EC 303 583

AUTHOR Hedrick, Brad N.; Hedrick, Sharon
TITLE The Undiscovered Athlete: A Perspective on Collegiate Sports for Persons with Disabilities.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Conference of the Association of Higher Education and Disability (Baltimore, MD, July 21-24, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adapted Physical Education; Athletes; *College Athletics; College Students; Compliance (Legal); *Disabilities; Educational Needs; Financial Support; Higher Education; Mainstreaming; *Program Development; *Student Needs

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the need for athletic programming adapted for students with disabilities at the college level, impediments to the development of such programs, and the actions required to stimulate program development. The paper examines the impact of athletics on overall life quality, the need for generalist coaches to provide these services in mainstream settings with support from specialists, and the lack of research or instructional media concerned with adapted sports. Three major impediments to program development are identified: (1) the absence of opportunities for persons with disabilities to acquire the knowledge, skills, and interest necessary to promote the adoption of such programs; (2) the segregated organizational structure of adapted sports; and (3) economic constraints. Recommendations include encouraging committed faculty to advocate for adapted sports, hiring specialist staff if possible, beginning with individual sports, and providing athletic scholarships. The conclusion notes that denial of access to "nonacademic" services afforded to able-bodied students on the basis of a disability is illegal. (Contains 46 references.) (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 377 655

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

The Undiscovered Athlete: A Perspective on Collegiate Sports for Persons with Disabilities

Brad N. Hedrick, Ph.D.
Division of Rehabilitation Education Services
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

Sharon Hedrick

Running Head: Undiscovered Athletes

Contact Person:

Brad Hedrick
Division of Rehabilitation Education Services
1207 S. Oak St.
Champaign, IL 61820
Ph: (217) 333 4606
Fax: (217) 333

EC 303 583

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Brad Hedrick
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Undiscovered Athlete: A Perspective on Collegiate Sports for Persons with Disabilities

Abstract

Twenty years after the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, considerable progress has been made in affording students with physical disabilities greater access to academic curricula. However, discrimination continues with regard to the extracurricular domain of institutionally sponsored athletics. Indeed, on most university campuses, students with physical disabilities represent the only constituency not afforded access to collegiate athletic programming. In spite of the fact that athletic programs within the 803 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) member schools in 1989 generated revenues in excess of 1.5 billion dollars, only 6 of those institutions were known to have sponsored adapted varsity athletic programming for students with disabilities. In light of this problem, this paper will address: 1.) the need for collegiate adapted sports, 2.) the major impediments to the development of such programs, and 3.) the actions required to stimulate their introduction.

The Undiscovered Athlete: A Perspective on Collegiate Sports for Persons with Disabilities

Introduction

In 1980, SH was selected by University of Illinois varsity athletes as the U of I Athlete of the Year. As a graduate student, SH won Olympic Gold medals in the 800 meter track events held in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics and the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, Korea, setting new world records each time. SH graduated with honors while earning both a bacaulareate and a masters degree in health education. SH became a registered dietitian and works as a diabetic nutrition education specialist.

In 1993, JD won her fourth consecutive Boston Marathon in a world record time of 1 hour and 34 minutes. In 1992, JD was selected as the Amateur Athlete of the Year by the National Women's Sport Foundation and advanced to the 800 meter finals in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, finishing second with a time of 1 minute and 56 seconds. Academically, JD graduated with honors while earning a bacalaureate degree in speech communication and a master of science degree in rehabilitation administration. In 1991, JD was selected by the Lincoln Academy as the Outstanding Student Laureate of the University of Illinois.

SH, a University of Illinois student athlete, advanced to the finals of the 1500 meter track event in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, finishing sixth. SH is the world record holder in the mile (3:40), 800 meter (1:40), 1,500 meter (3:14) and is the National 10K Champion (20:38). SH earned a bacaulaureate degree in kinesiology, graduating with honors. SH is currently a graduate student in kinesiology.

What do each of these highly accomplished student athletes have in common? Each was a student athlete with a disability who participated in the University of Illinois varsity wheelchair sports program. The scholarship and athleticism of these three athletes are self-evident, and most

would agree that it would have been a travesty for them not to have had the opportunity to develop and refine their athletic talents while attending college. Paradoxically, due to the dearth of university sponsored adapted sports programs, thousands of other students with disabilities with the potential to equal or surpass the athletic feats of the three aforementioned athletes will never do so. They are the undiscovered athletes of our college and university campuses.

Since the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, access to academic curricula has substantially improved. As a result, more students with disabilities are matriculating to college campuses. From 1978 to 1991, the percent of first year freshmen reporting disabilities increased from 2.6 to 8.8 percent, with 6.6 percent of the 1991 respondents reporting disabilities other than learning disabilities (Henderson, 1992). Unfortunately, the increased acceptance and assimilation of students with disabilities, reflected in these statistics, has not occurred in the extracurricular domain of varsity athletics.

Students with physical disabilities remain the only campus constituency for whom access to collegiate athletics is universally denied. Indeed, the omission of elite adapted sports events from the 1993 World University Games reflects the prejudicial policies of our institutions of higher education in affording students with disabilities accommodative access to athletic programming. In light of this problem, the threefold purpose of this paper is to address: 1.) the need for collegiate adapted sports, 2.) the major impediments to the development of such programs, and 3.) the actions required to stimulate their introduction.

The Need for Adapted Collegiate Athletics

Collegiate adapted sports constitute a potentially efficacious means of enhancing the quality of life of persons with physical disabilities, socially, psychologically and physically. Secondly, the widespread development of collegiate adapted sports is essential for the proportion of recreation and physical education professionals with experience in the development and administration of adapted sports to be significantly increased. Third, growth in the presence of collegiate adapted sports

programs is needed to facilitate increased adapted sport science research activity as well as the development of research based instructional systems/materials.

Life Quality Impact

The onset of physical disability can cause devaluation of the self perceptions of an individual with a disability as well as the perceptions which others hold regarding such individuals (Goffman, 1963; Wright, 1960). According to the theory of social role valorization (Wolfensberger,1985), the demonstration of proficiency within highly valued social roles serves to enhance perceptions of self and others regarding the competency and status of stigmatized individuals. Given the irrefutable, international significance and value placed upon competence in competive athletics, it follows that the demonstration of athletic prowess within adapted sports could reduce the stigma associated with disability. Of course, the extent to which favorable perceptual change is elicited is, in all probability, contingent upon the degree to which the adapted sport emulates the "valued" analog with regard to the nature and quality of play (Labanowich, 1975; Labanowich, 1984; Nixon, 1989).

Over the years, numerous rehabilitation professionals have offered anecdotal evidence that participation in adapted sports can enhance the self esteem and perceptions of competence of persons with disabilities (Guttman, 1971, 1976; Labanowich, 1975; Nugent, 1964), and positively alter the stigmatized perceptions of others (Jackson & Davis, 1983; Lipton, 1970; Stewart, 1981). More recently, there have been several attempts to garner empirical evidence of such relationships. For example, participation in wheelchair tennis was found to be related to significant improvement in the general perceptions of physical competence and/or general wheelchair mobility skills of adolescents with mobility impairments (Greenwood, Dzewaltowski & French,1990; Hedrick, 1984). With regard to the perceptions of others, the joint participation of persons with disabilities and their able-bodied peers in physically active sports was found to be significantly related to positive change in the attitudes of the able-bodied participants regarding their coactors with disabilities (Hamilton & Anderson, 1983). Similarly, Hedrick (1985) and Kisabeth & Richardson

(1985) also found the participation of able-bodied and disabled individuals in physically active leisure to be associated with positive change in the able-bodied subjects' perceptions of the sport competence of their peers with disabilities. Although the data are far from conclusive, the results generally support the contention that positive change in the perceptions of persons with disabilities and others can be elicited via participation of the former in adapted sports.

Increased access to instructional and competive adapted sport programming is also needed to stimulate change in the precarious health and fitness status of persons with disabilities. In *Healthy People 2000*, the U.S. Public Health Service specifically identifies people with disabilities as being at greater risk of incurring debilitating health problems than the general population (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Public Health Service, 1991). The report further states that these problems only serve to exacerbate existing limitations attributable to disability; thereby serving to further limit the quality of life for persons with disabilities. Not surprisingly, *Healthy People 2000* identifies increased physical activity as a significant factor in reducing the incidence and severity of these health problems.

The onset of severe physical disability has generally been found to be associated with the adoption of hypokinetic lifestyles (Coyle & Kinney, 1990; Harrison & Kuric, 1987; Price, 1983). Inactivity on the part of persons with severe physical disabilities serves to accelerate their loss of muscle mass and gain in body fat; a scenario often associated with nearly irreversible functional loss (Hoffman, 1986; Shephard, 1988). Conversely, increased physical activity has been found to be associated with reductions in the frequency and/or severity of chronic secondary health problems associated with disability and/or hypokinetic lifestyles. For example, sedentary individuals with spinal cord injuries have been found to have significantly lower levels of high density lipoprotein (HDL) than their vigorously active counterparts who participate in wheelchair athletics and their able-bodied peers (Brenes, Dearwater, Shapera, LaPorte & Collins, 1986). Low levels of HDL are associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease. It is not surprising therefore that cardiovascular disorders have become the leading cause of death among individuals with spinal cord injuries (Le & Price, 1982). Spinal cord injured participants in wheelchair sports have also been

found to have fewer kidney infections and pressure sores requiring long-term hospitalizations than their sedentary peers (Stotts, 1990).

Clearly, the introduction of collegiate adapted sports could serve to reverse this detrimental pattern of behavior by affording students with disabilities the opportunity to acquire and refine their skills, knowledge in physically active sports which could be pursued for a lifetime. In addition, as a result of the modeling influence of collegiate athletes with disabilities, thousands of others may be vicariously stimulated to amend their hypokinetic lifestyles and become actively involved in adapted sports. Indeed, the latter two college athletes described in the introduction concur that viewing the telecast of the women's 800 meter wheelchair track event held during the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics and won by a former collegiate athlete, served as the catalyst for their involvement in wheelchair sports.

Coaches Training

The dearth of recreation and/or physical education professionals with adapted sports experience serves as another major constraint upon programmatic growth. If every university were to immediately introduce adapted athletic programming, few would have access to knowledgeable, competent coaches. To ameliorate this problem, it is essential that the number of collegiate adapted sports programs be increased. This would provide more opportunities for recreation and/or kinesiology students, whether generalists or specialists, to work as adapted sports volunteers or assistants, under the tutilige of experienced coaches.

In addition, as adapted sports have become more sophisticated, the expertise and input of an increasingly diverse array of professionals including exercise physiologists, physical therapists, sports medicine staff and psychologists has become increasingly necessary. Thus, it is essential that recreation and physical education curricula reinforce contact with adapted sports across each of the aforementioned professional areas. For this to happen, the curricula should de-emphasize the necessity of professional specializations in serving the recreational and physical education needs of persons with disabilities. The promotion of such specializations as "therapeutic recreation" and

"adapted physical education" tend to over emphasize the "differences" attributable to disability, and the subsequent need for extraordinary expertise/credentials. In so doing, the generalist is perceived as lacking sufficient expertise, and therefore, does not assume responsibility for serving the needs and interests of persons with disabilities. Depauw (1990) offers some support for this concept, when she states that with movement towards accommodation within the least restrictive environment, the adapted physical educator must become a consultant to the generalists in the mainstream setting. Empowering generalists in this manner will promote the assimilation of persons with disabilities into the "least restrictive" sport environment, and promote the development of a diverse cadre of professionals with interest and experience in adapted sports.

Research and Instructional Media

Similarly, the absence of adapted sports on university campuses tends to supress the volume, breadth and scope of adapted sport science research, and impedes collaboration between practitioners and academicians in the development of training and instructional methods and media. The dearth of adapted sport science research has frequently been cited in the literature (Asken & Goodling, 1986; Depauw,1986; Depauw, 1988). Unfortunately, the absence of university based adapted sports serves to inhibit research in adapted sport science by limiting access to student athletes with disabilities to serve as research subjects. Of course, vigilant researchers often obtain funding to bring a sample of active athletes with disabilities to campus. However, in such situations, investigators must rely upon simple, short term descriptive research designs while neglecting more useful experimental designs. Indeed, the absence of experimental training studies is particularly detrimental to the identification of optimal training procedures across different sports and types and levels of disability. To date, much of the training information available to athletes and coaches is anecdotal in nature and/or has been extrapolated from research with able-bodied athletes (Hedrick, Morse & Figoni, 1988). Both of the latter processes are at best of suspect reliability and often result in the transmission of erroneous information.

More collegiate adapted sports programs are also needed to accommodate the development of technical instructional media in adapted sports. Though several "show and tell" texts on adapted sports have been published, few manuscripts, texts, manuals or video tapes exist which address the details of sport specific training and skill development. The scarcity of instructional media is to a great extent attributable to the absence of collegiate adapted sports, since university faculty with the academic expertise and writing skills needed to create such documentation have little or no opportunity to collaborate with knowledgeable, skillful teaching adapted sport coaches in its development.

Impediments to Program Development

Generally, the greatest impediments to the development of university based adapted sports programs have been: (1.) the universal absence of opportunities for persons with disabilities to acquire the knowledge, skills, aptitude and interest necessary to promote the adoption of active sport roles, (2.) the segregated organizational structure of adapted sports, and (3.) economic constraints.

Limited Sport Socialization

The most onerous impediment to the development of adapted athletic programming on college campuses relates to the aforementioned success with which persons with disabilities are so adeptly socalized to be hypokinetic (Coyle & Kinney, 1990; Harrison & Kuric, 1987; Howell, 1978; Price, 1983). Generally, the requisite knowledge, disposition and skills necessary for the assumption of active sport roles are acquired via the process of sport socialization (Kenyon and McPherson, 1973). Within this process, significant others (parents, siblings, peers, coaches, etc.), in conjunction with various social systems or socializing agencies (family, school, church, community, etc.), exert influence upon the individual to promote the learning and assimilation of sport roles. However, research suggests that these significant socializing agents and/or agencies are often considerably less nurturing of sport role assimilation by persons with disabilities

(Hedrick, 1979; Nixon, 1988; Sherrill, 1986; Sherrill, Pope & Arnhold, 1986; Sherrill, Rainbolt, Montelione & Pope, 1986).

For example, secondary education institutions continue to usher youth with disabilities into separate, adapted physical education classes or send them to "study hall" in lieu of participating in physical education (Depauw, 1990; Sherrill, Rainbolt, Montelione & Pope, 1986). Obviously, the latter scenario results in a total failure to reinforce the acquisition of the skills, disposition and knowledge necessary to promote engagement in sports. However, segregated adapted physical education classes are in all likelihood no more efficacious in fostering this objective because legitimate adapted sports, which could be pursued throughout the lifespan, are rarely used as the context for promoting the development of physical education objectives within such classes. Although Labanowich (1975) voiced disapproval for this trend nearly 20 years ago, students with disabilities and their parents, continue to attest to the fact that adapted sport skills are rarely taught in adapted physical education.

In 1985, the majority of the adolescent participants in a wheelchair tennis training study in Kansas City reported that they had never before received instruction by a coach in a "legitimate" sport. "Legitimate", in their eyes, meant a sport comparable to those pursued by their able bodied siblings and peers. Most said that their physical education programming had almost exclusively involved activities or games which were contextually divorced from anything remotely consistent with the activities afforded their able bodied peers and which had little potential for lifelong pursuit (Hedrick, 1984).

Similar anecdotes continue to be reported by children with disabilities and their parents at Summer Wheelchair Sports Camps held annually since 1986 on the campus of the University of Illinois. The majority of these children and their parents continue to echo this bleak depiction of access to adapted sports. Fortunately, by virture of their presence at these camps, those whom we interviewed had overcome this dilemma and had gained or created access to adapted sports programming outside of school. However, they represent the extraordinary exceptions, as the agents and agencies of sport socialization continue to successfully circumnavigate the needs of youth with

disabilities. To date, only the state of Minnesota has formally established a competitive adapted sports program for students with disabilities within the its high school athletic association, the Minnesota High School League (Hanson,1993). Consequently, in light of their abysmal access to instructional and participatory sport programming, it is hardly surprising that college students with disabilities neither expect nor demand reasonable accommodation with regard to instructional and/or competitive adapted sports programming.

Segregated Structure of Adapted Sports

Since the late 1960's, numerous federal legislative mandates have been enacted for the purpose of deinstitutionalizing services for persons with disabilities while promoting their assimilation into the cultural mainstream (e.g., Architectural Barriers Act of 1968; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990). Ironically, in spite of these legislative milestones, organized adapted sports remain institutionally segregated.

Generally, adapted sports are administered by a somewhat ecclectic group of national governing bodies (NGBs) and international governing bodies (IGBs) which function, for the most part, outside the aegis of "mainstream" national and/or international sport governing bodies. For example, the United States Cerebral Palsy Athletic Association (USCPAA), National Handicapped Sports (NHS), National Wheelchair Athletic Association (NWAA), United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) and the United States Les Autres Sports Association (USLASA) are national governing bodies for adapted athletics which fall under the aegis of one of the following internationally segregated sport governing bodies, the International Cerebral Palsy Sports and Recreation Association (CP ISRA), International Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports Federation (ISMWSF), International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) and the International Sport Organization for the Disabled (ISOD). Similarly, collegiate wheelchair sports have been developed under the jurisdiction of the National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA) and the National Wheelchair Athletic Association (NWAA); outside of such mainstream collegiate athletic organizations (NGBs) as

the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) or the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). Without change, this organizational arrangement can only serve to limit the future development of adapted collegiate sports programs.

First, this segregated structure serves to impede communication and cooperative planning among the national governing bodies for adapted sports. Secondly, it limits communication between the disability specific NGBs and their counterparts serving athletes who are able-bodied. With regard to the first point, student athletes with disabilities are a minority within a minority. Thus, the successful promotion of collegiate adapted sports among the member institutions of such collegiate NGBs as the NCAA and the NAIA could well require that the disability specific NGBs present a politically unified front, and support of a colaterally determined strategy to accomplish that end. Presently, these groups remain philosophically, organizationally and administratively fragmented, and there is no ongoing dialogue among them to develop and implement strategies for the promotion of collegiate adapted sports programming.

In terms of the second point, this segregated organizational structure inhibits the communication and interaction with mainstream NGBs necessary for the development of policies coducive to the integration of athletes with disabilities into the "least restrictive" enviroment. Within the current model, misconceptions regarding the mission, nature, competitiveness, athleticism and eligibility criteria of adapted athletics which inhibit assimilation are allowed to continue unabated. For example, it is unlikely that the membership of the NCAA are aware that persons with lower extremity disabilities which do not impede ambulation but which preclude the performance of essential sport specific locomotor functions are eligible for participation in wheelchair basketball. As a result, they may be under the opinion that their respective institutions do not have a sufficient population base of students with disabilities to adaquately sustain a wheelchair basketball program. However, when those students who cannot participate in ambulatory varsity sports but are not "stereotypically" disabled are included in the equation, the campus population is often more than sufficient to sustain a program. Coincidentally, it should come as no surprise that since adapted collegiate sport programs are not organized under the auspices of

the NCAA or the NAIA, even those campuses which sponsor programs have placed them under the auspices of the office charged with responsibility for serving the accommodative needs of students with disabilities rather than their respective divisions of intercollegiate athletics.

As a result, of the communicative and interactional deficiencies which characterize the present organizational structure, the true assimilation of elite collegiate adapted sports within the competitive mainstream is unlikely. Many might take umbrige with that statement, citing that in spite of the existing structure, men's and women's wheelchair track events have been held in conjunction with the 1984, 1988 and 1992 Summer Olympics. However, it need only be noted that 10 years and 6 "exhibition" events later, adapted sports are still not Olympic medal events. To date the aforementioned events represent little more that representational tokenism. They have retained "exhibition" status throughout that time span, and as a result, their status is as tenuous for 1996 as it was prior to their first introduction in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. Indeed, it is unlikely that adapted sports will be included in subsequent Olympic competitions as full medal events until such time as the criteria for inclusion and the process by which sports bid for inclusion is accessible to adapted sports. For this to occur, the current segregated model must be gradually replaced by one wherein adapted sports become legitimate members of mainstream NGBs. A similar scenario will no doubt hold true for collegiate based adapted sports.

In 1980, Stan Labanowich recommended that the NCAA adopt a policy statement regarding the implementation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Upon review of the recommendation of NCAA lawyers, Walter Byers, the NCAA Executive Director, responded that there did not appear to be a need for the NCAA to consider the issue of adapted athletics at that time. In 1983, Frank Brasile, Assistant Commissioner of the NWBA Intercollegiate Division wrote Alan Williams, Chairman of the NCAA Long Range Planning Committee suggesting that the NCAA revisit the notion of creating a "wheelchair sports division" (personal communication, March 1983). The LRPC summarily dismissed the recommendation by stating that the collegiate wheelchair basketball programs in existence were "intramural or club sport in nature", and that Dr. Brasile should contact the National Intramural Recreation and Sport Association (NIRSA) for support. Dr. Brasile

wrote the NCAA director of Professional Development, Stanley Johnson, again in 1993 with a similar inquiry (personal communcation, March 1993). Again the NCAA responded in a manner consistent with the original statement fashioned by Byers in 1980, by saying that the NCAA's assimilation of intercollegiate wheelchair basketball was not warranted at this time. In the absence of an executive fiat mandating that the NCAA change its policies regarding the support of adapted collegiate athletics, the most likely mechanism for amending NCAA policies will be to garner internal support by stimulating the creation of new programs and inducing an increasing number of its member institutions to support the inclusion of adapted sports.

Economic Constraints

The first disclaimer employed in deflecting queries regarding the development of adapted sports programs usually goes something like this, "We sincerely believe in the importance of providing students with disabilities with equivalent educational access including extracurricular programming, but we simply don't have the money to create a new varsity sports program at this time." The absurdity of validating inaction in accommodating student athletes with disabilities on the basis of insufficient funds is readily apparent when one considers that the 803 institutional members of the NCAA generated in excess of 1.51 billion dollars in 1989 alone (Raiborn, 1990). Without question, collegiate athletics, like many other enterprises, experienced significant growth during the lucrative 1980's and are currently in the midst of a belt tightening recovery. Indeed, the same survey reported that although approximately 48% of the NCAA membership received government support to augment athletic program revenues, 63 percent operated at a deficit (Raiborn,1990). Overextended budgets exacerbated by diminishing revenues in the 1990's and the mandate for gender equity are forcing athletic directors to take drastic cost containment action including the downsizing and/or elimination of programs. However, just as program restructuring and resource reallocation will be necessary, in the absence of substantial revenue growth, to accommodate balanced athletic budgets and athletic program equity for women, some restructuring and reallocation will be essential to accommodate the introduction of adapted sports programming for

students with disabilities. It is intolerable that in 1993, only six NCAA member institutions offered an accommodative complement in adapted sports for students with disabilities.

The exacerbation of travel expense due to the sparse competitive field of athletes with disabilities at other institutions within the "traditional competitive area" is another often used rationale for not developing adapted sports programs. In fact, that rationale for inaction was specifically used in a news segment produced by the NBC Today Show in July of 1992 pertaining to the topic of collegiate adapted sports. The impetus for the story was provided by a University of Miami freshman, who happened to be the nation's top ranked "A" Division wheelchair tennis player, and who subsequently requested that the University of Miami consider giving him a varsity tennis scholarship. The institution denied the request saying that to do so would require that they take a scholarship away from an able bodied tennis player. In defense of the decision, representatives of the University of Miami stated that there were no varsity wheelchair tennis programs at other schools with which the University of Miami competes. In actuality, due to the overwhelming neglect of students with disabilities in the development of athletic programming, the scarcity of other collegiate programs is a universal rationale for inaction. However, by viewing the scarcity of programs as a challenge rather than a prohibitive obstacle, a proactive institution could provide the impetus for the development of a national collegiate tennis program. The precedent has been set. Professor Tim Nugent created an adapted sports program at the University of Illinois in 1948 within an absolute void. The U of I program gave birth to the National Wheelchair Basketball Association, and as a result of this proactive posture, the NWBA has grown to serve over 2000 athletes with disabilities nationwide.

It is clear that an abundance of justifications exist for not creating adapted varsity sports programming. Additionally, refuting those justifications requires that well embedded prejudicial stereotypes be overlooked, and that the athletic legitimacy of individuals so long stigmatized for their physical incapabilities be accepted. That is the quintessential "tall order." However, before such excuses are adopted as a rationale for inaction, the impact of our prejudice should be monitored through the introduction of the following litmus test. Remove the phrase "students with disabilities"

from the context of each of the "reasons" for not implementing accommodative varsity sports programming and replace it with one or all of the following: "women", "blacks", "latinos/latinas". Under the latter conditions, the resulting statements are immediately recognizable as socially unacceptable and discriminatory. They should be no less unacceptable where students with disabilities are concerned.

Considerations for Action

For collegiate adapted sports to achieve their potential, action must be taken to promote the ultimate inclusion of adapted sports within the NCAA and the NAIA. However, past experience with the NCAA has made it clear that, this will require that faculty advocates of adapted sports on each campus assume responsibility for creating programs, and for garnering widespread campus support for the inclusion of adapted sports within the institution's NGB. Although it would be advantageous for adapted sport NGBs to collaterally develop and support a strategic plan for the development of collegiate adapted sport programming, the key to success in this endeavor is the presence of faculty members on each campus who are energized and willing to act as program catalysts.

Such faculty members must be passionate about the necessity of students with disabilities receiving accommodative adapted athletic programming and they must be willing and able to act proactively by attempting to stimulate interest in sports by students with disabilities who have learned all too well not to expect nor to demand that they be afforded such opportunities. In addition, they must educate students as to the variety and scope of adapted athletic options that exist, assist in the development and administration of adapted sports programming and educate students about the importance of self advocacy in obtaining campus support for adapted sports. The latter function may well be the most critical, since the development of a politically astute group of self advocates with disabilities willing to relentlessly seek accommodative action by their respective institutions is ultimately essential for success to be achieved.

Operationally, the costs of adapted sports are small in contrast to those of most varsity programs for able bodied students. With the exception of staff salaries, the University of Illinois offers men's and women's wheelchair basketball, track and field and quad rugby at an annual expense of approximately fifty thousand dollars. The combined budget for both basketball teams, which played a total of 55 games, was approximately $25,000. Although this amount will not support the travel standards of most able-bodied sport programs, it was sufficient for the university to maintain its national and/or international prominence in each of the sports mentioned.

If sufficient resources are available to hire staff, it is recommended that an individual with coaching and administrative experience in adapted sports be hired on a full time basis to direct all adapted sports programs and to oversee the selection and training of graduate student staff and/or volunteers hired to direct specific sport programs. Of course, if this is not possible, institutions can do what they often do in able-bodied athletics; hire part-time coaches to direct specific programs. It is generally recommended that graduate students not be given responsibility for the direction of such programs. Rarely are graduate students available who have coaching experience in adapted athletics. Subsequently, they must learn everything on the job. In most cases, by the time they become familiar with their duties as adapted sport coaches, it's time for them to graduate. This is not a fair situation for the graduate student, nor is is appropriate for the student athletes with disabilities. Just as athletes who are able-bodied want and deserve competent, qualified coaches, athletes with disabilities want and deserve the same.

In terms of the menu of sports to be introduced, individual adapted sports are recommended in the beginning. Individual sports do not require a specific critical mass of students with disabilities to be viable. Secondly, individual sports are more flexible in meeting the needs and interests of a broad range of students with disabilities. For example, although the University of Illinois track and field program is best known for the accomplishments of it's wheelchair athletes, the program has also served a number of national caliber track and field athletes with visual impairments.

With regard to athletic scholarships, students with disabilities often receive educational funding from their state vocational rehabilitation service agencies. Therefore, tuition is typically not as significant an issue in adapted sport unless the student is an out of state resident. In the latter instance, funding to offset the difference between the residential and non residential tuition rates may be needed. Of course, if the adapted sport program is conceived in a similar vein to that of their able bodied program counterparts, scholarships will be essential. Due to the sparse distribution of academically qualified and athletically talented students with disabilities, maintaining a highly competitive program will require that scholarships be provided to recruit out of state students. In addition, in team sports, scholarships are needed to assure program continuity. A track team can flourish in perpetuity with substantial fluxuation in membership, however, the same cannot be said for a basketball team.

As for equipment and facilities, adapted sports do not involve any appreciable, unique expenses with the exception of wheelchair sports. In the latter case, acquiring a sufficient inventory of sport wheelchairs can represent a substantial investment. However, wheelchair manufacturers are becoming increasingly amenable to negotiating individual and/or team equipment sponsorships with coaches. Otherwise much, if not most of the equipment used in training and competition by able bodied athletes can also be used for adapted athletics. In terms of facilities, the impetus afforded by the numerous legislative mandates mentioned earlier has prompted the introduction of accessible design in facilities used for athletic training and competition.

Finally, campus advocates can take heart in the knowledge that the problemmatic nature of transportation in adapted sports programming has been all but erradicated as the result of the previously identified legislative acts. Commercial rail and air carriers have become quite adept in accommodating the travel needs of athletes with disabilities. As for more localized travel, the logistics of transporting a quad rugby team comprised severely impaired quadriplegics can be readily accommodated through the use of a trailer and multi-passenger vehicles which ride relatively low to accommodate easier transfers in and out of the vehicles. Portable hand controls

which can be easily installed and removed in a variety of vehicles may also be used by persons with disabilities in transporting athletes to training and competition sites.

Concluding Remarks

As a final note, the denial of accommodative access to the "nonacademic" services afforded able bodied students solely on the basis of a disability is illegal under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. According to civil rights attorney Salome Heyward (1992), post secondary education institutions are required under Section 504 to provide adapted sports programming when the criterion for offering any sport is met. As recorded by Labanowich (1980), a report prepared by William Kramer for Dennis Poppe, Assistant Director of Events for the NCAA suggests a similar finding.

According to the report, the Guide to the Section 504 Self Evaluation for Colleges and Universities, which was reviewed and approved by the HEW Service for Civil Rights, states that it is reasonably clear that post secondary educational institutions must provide adapted athletic activities provided that there is sufficient interest among the institution's students with disabilities. Unless the institution responded in such a manner to an identifiable student interest, it would not be providing equal opportunities for students interested in regular programs of the institution.

Thus, it is clear that a mechanism exists for eliminating this injustice and prompting the introduction of adapted collegiate sports. However, just as women have had to fight for equity in collegiate athletics, the 6.6 percent of the campus population with physical disabilities requiring adapted sport accommodations must become similarly unified, politically astute and skillful in their quest for recognition and support.

References

Asken, M.J. & Goodling, M.D. (1986). Sport psychology: An undeveloped discipline from among the sport sciences for disabled athletes. Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 3(4), 312-319.

Brenes, G.,Dearwater, S., Shapera, R., LaPorte, R.E. & Collins,E. (1986). High density lipoprotein cholesterol concentrations in physically active and sedentary sci patients. Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, 67, 445-450.

Coyle, C.P. & Kinney, W.B. (1990). Leisure characteristics of adults with physical disabilities. Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 24(4), 64-73.

Depauw, K. (1986). Research on sport for athletes with disabilities. Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 3(4), 292-299.

Depauw, K. (1988). Sport for individuals with disabilities: Research opportunities. Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 5(2), 80-89.

Depauw, K. (1990). PE and sport for disabled individuals in the united states. Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance, February, 53-57.

Greenwood, C.M., Dzewaltowski, D.A. & French, R. (1990). Self efficacy and psychological well being of wheelchair tennis participants and wheelchair nontennis participants. Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 7(1), 12-21.

Goffman, E. (1963). Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Guttman, Sir L. (1971, July 16). Sports for the disabled. The Times Education Supplement, 31-32.

Guttman, Sir L. (1976). Textbook of sport for the disabled. Aylesburg, Bucks, England: H.M. & M. Publisher, Ltd.

Hamilton, E.J. & Anderson, S.C. (1983). Effects of leisure activities on attitudes toward people with disabilities. Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 17(3), 50-57.

Hanson, B. (1993). Minnesota association for adapted athletics. In David Beaver (Ed.), Proceedings of Achieving a Balance: National Adapted Physical Activity Conference , (pp. 10-15). Macomb, IL: Western Illinois University.

Harrison, C. & Kuric, J. (1987). Community reintegration of spinal cord injured persons: Problems and perceptions. Abstracts Digest of the Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Spinal Cord Injury Association, 13, 263-267.

Hedrick, B. (1979). A look at disabled sports. Parks & Recreation, December, p.54.

Hedrick, B. (1984). The effects of wheelchair tennis participation and mainstreaming upon the perceptions of competence of physically disabled adolescents. Unpublished doctoral dissertation: University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.

Hedrick, B. (1986). The effects of wheelchair tennis participation and mainstreaming upon the perceptions of competence of physically disabled adolescents. Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 14, 34-46.

Hedrick, B. (1985). Wheelchair sports as a mechanism for altering the perceptions of the nondisabled regarding their disabled peers' competence. Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 20(4), 72-84.

Hedrick, B., Morse, M. & Figoni, S. (1988). Training practices of elite wheelchair roadracers. Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 5(2), 140-153.

Henderson, C. (1992). College freshmen with disabilities: A statistical profile. Washington, DC: HEALTH Resource Center.

Heyward, S. (1992). Access to education for the disabled: A guide to compliance with section 504 of the rehabilitation act of 1973. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

Hoffman, M.D. (1986). Cardiorespiratory fitness and training in quadriplegics and paraplegics. Journal of Sports Medicine, 3, 312-330.

Jackson, R.W. & Davis, G. M. (1983). The value of sports and recreation for the physically disabled. Orthopedic Clinics of North America, 14(2), 301-315.

Kenyon, G., & and McPherson, B. (1973). Becoming involved in physical activity and sport: A process of socialization. In G.L. Rarick (Ed.), Physical Activity: Human Growth and Development , (303 332). New York: Academic Press.

Kisabeth, K.L. & Richardson, D.B. (1985). Changing attitudes toward disabled individuals: The effect of one disabled person. Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 19(2), 24-33.

Labanowich, S. (1978). The psychology of wheelchair sports. Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 1,11-17.

Labanowich, S. (1980). NCAA proposed statement of policy and recommendations for the implementation of section 504 of the rehabilitation act of 1973. Unpublished manuscript. April 10, 1980.

Labanowich, S. (1988). A case for the integration of the disabled into the olympic games. Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 5, 264-272.

Labanowich, S., Karman, P., Veal, L.E. & Wiley, B.D. (1984). Principles and foundations for the organization of wheelchair sports. Sports 'n Spokes, 2, 26-32.

Le, C.T. & Price, M. (1982). Survival from spinalcord njury. Journal of Chronic Disease, 35, 487-492.

Lipton, B. (1970). The role of wheelchair sports in rehabilitation. International Rehabilitation Review, 12(2), 21-24.

Nixon, H. (1988). Getting over the worry hurdle: Parental encouragement and sports involvement of visually impaired children and youths. Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 5(1), 29-43.

Nixon, H. (1989). Integration of disabled people in mainstream sport: Case study of a partially sighted child. Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 6(1), 17-31.

Nugent, T.J. (1964). Let's look beyond. Recreation in Treatment Centers. 3, 3-42.

Patrick, G.D. (1986). The effects of wheelchair competition on self concept and acceptance of disability in novice athletes. Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 20(4), 61-71.

Price, R. (1983). Spinal cord injury, life stage and leisure satisfaction. Unpublished doctoral dissertation: University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.

Raiborn, M .H. (1990). Revenues and expenses of intercollegiate athletics programs: Analysis of financial trends and relationships 1985 1989 . Overland Park, KS: National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Shephard, R.J. (1988). Sports medicine and the wheelchair athlete. Sports Medicine, 4, 226-247.

Sherrill, C. (1986). Social and psychological dimensions of sports for disabled athletes. In C. Sherrill (Ed.) The 1984 Olympic Scientific Congress Proceedings, Vol. 9: Sport and Disabled Athletes , (pp. 21 33). Champaign,IL: Human Kinetics.

Sherrill, C., Pope, C. & Arnhold, R. (1986). Sport socialization of blind athletes: An exploratory study. Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness, 80(5), 740-744.

Sherrill, C., Rainbolt, W., Montelione, T. & Pope, C. (1986). Sport socialization of blind and of cerebral palsied elite athletes. In C. Sherrill (Ed.) The 1984 Olympic Scientific Congress Proceedings, Vol. 9: Sport and Disabled Athletes , (pp. 187 195). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Stewart, N. (1981). The value of sport in the rehabilitation of the physically disabled. Canadian Journal of Applied Sport Sciences, 6(4), 166-167.

Stotts, K.M. (1985). Health maintenance: Paraplegic athletes and nonathletes. Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, 67, 109-114.

Szyman, R. (1980). The effect of participation in wheelchair sports. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.

U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Public Health Service (1991). Healthy people 2000: National health promotion and disease prevention objectives. Washington, DC: USDHHS.

Wofensberger, W. (1983). Social role valorization: A proposed new term for the principle of normalization. Mental Retardation, 21(6), 234-239.

Wright, B.A. (1960). Physical disability: A psychological approach. New York: Harper & Brothers.